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THE CURKON LINE**VITAL STORAGE**

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KODAHSS

THE CURZON LINE

The eastern frontier of Poland, later known as the "Curzon Line", was described in a declaration approved by the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference on December 8, 1919. 1/ It became known as the "Curzon Line" in July 1920 when the British attempted to mediate in the Polish-Russian War and, acting through Lord Curzon, suggested this line as a Polish-Russian boundary.

The restoration of an independent Poland, whose frontiers would coincide with ethnic lines, was called for in President Wilson's Fourteen Points, Point XIII of which provided that

"An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenants."

According to the Lippman-Gobb interpretation, other emerging nationalities, "the Finns, the Lithuanians, the Letts, and perhaps also ... the Ukrainians", should also be regarded as deserving the same opportunity for free development as the Poles. With respect to Poland's eastern frontier, Messrs. Lippman and Gobb stated 2/

"On the east, Poland should receive no territory in which Lithuanians or Ukrainians predominate."

"The principle on which frontiers will be delimited is contained in the President's word

"indisputably".

1/ Signed by the President of the Supreme Council, M. Clemenceau, December 8, 1919. NB-104, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 100.03501/104.

2/ Foreign Relations, 1918, Supp. 1, p. 467.

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"indisputably". This may imply the taking of an impartial census before frontiers are marked."

Findings of "The Inquiry"

Reconstitution of an independent Poland and the frontier between Poland and Russia were carefully studied by "The Inquiry". 2/ Early in 1919 it recommended that the border regions of the south and west which had broken away from Russia and set up their own national governments, particularly the Baltic Provinces and the Ukraine, should be encouraged to re-unite with Russia "if reunion can be accomplished within a federalized or genuinely democratic Russia". Finland, Poland, the Armenians in Transcaucasia, and possibly Lithuania were excepted from this recommendation because they represented

"... nationalities whose severance from the Russian Empire would not destroy the Russian economic fabric, and would at the same time liberate peoples who, because of historic oppressions and geographical position, would probably develop a stronger political and economic life if permitted to separate from the rest of the former Russian Empire." Map A herewith

With specific reference to Poland, The Inquiry recommended

"1) That a) an independent Polish state be established which b) shall include indisputably Polish populations." Map B herewith

"2) That a union of Poland and Lithuania

be

3/ The summary of the views of the specialists who had composed "The Inquiry" and who became members of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace appeared in the "Outline of Tentative Report and Recommendations prepared by the Intelligence Section, in Accordance with Instructions, for the President and the Plenipotentiaries, January 21, 1919", or more briefly as the "Red Book" or "Black Book" (File no. Paris Peace Conf. 188.112/1, printed in D. M. Miller, My Diary at the Conference of Paris, Vol. IV, p. 209).

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be effected, if possible, with boundaries as shown on map [B]

"3) That, if this union be not effected, Poland and Lithuania be established as mutually independent states, with boundaries not as shown on map [B], but adjusted to the ethnic facts in the Vilna-Grodno-Minsk district."

Concerning the frontiers of the proposed Polish state, The Inquiry said

"If a new Polish state is formed, it follows that the frontiers should be drawn so as to include all of the Polish majorities contiguous to the main group, in order not to leave upon the outside Polish districts that may form the center of irredentist movements.

"The eastern frontier assigned on the map to the Polish-Lithuanian-Catholic White Russian complex ought to stand, because it is based primarily on the line of religious division between Catholics and Orthodox.

"The proposed Poland might include on the southeast the hotly disputed and very puzzling territory and population of eastern Galicia, included between the solid and the dotted lines on this map. The region should be assigned to Poland only if the Ukraine is in its present state of chaos, and then only as a self-governing province, guaranteed by the League of Nations the right to decide on its own allegiance at a later date.

"If at the time of decision by the peace conference the Ukraine should give evidences of vitality, the disputed belt should be assigned to it, because in that region the Ukrainians (although very backward in culture) outnumber the Poles two to one."

The union of Poland and Lithuania was thought desirable because of historic ties and common economic

interests.

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interests. The Inquiry felt that the Lithuanians could be persuaded to accept union if they were conceded the governments of Vilna, Grodno, and Minsk which they coveted. If the union could not be brought about, the drawing of a boundary between Poland and Lithuania would prove very difficult because of the dispute concerning the three governments mentioned. The Inquiry drew only a tentative boundary line on Map [B] and stated that the facts for a definitive boundary could be obtained only by a careful census conducted by an impartial commission.

Inter-Allied Mission to Poland

The sending of an inter-Allied commission to Poland was discussed by the Supreme Council in late January 1919. 4/ Suspicions concerning Polish intentions were expressed at that time by Baron Sonnino and Mr. Lloyd George, whose respective governments were less ardent supporters of Polish claims than the governments of France and the United States. At meetings of the Supreme Council on January 29, 1919, the Polish position was stated by M. Roman Dmowski who said that a point of departure for fixing Polish boundaries should be the territorial limits of 1772, before the first partition. 5/ These boundaries should be "rectified according to present conditions". He conceded that the eastern frontiers of Poland should be curtailed and that both Lithuania and Ukraine should be excluded. At the same time, he contended that Russia was too chaotic to qualify for admission to a League of Nations, the Lithuanians were not sufficiently advanced in national unity or ideals to be included amongst "the nations", and the Ukrainian state was really organized anarchy. For these reasons, "it was too early to think of Lithuania or Ukraine as independent states". If organized as separate states, they should be united in some other state, and as the Lithuanians were closely allied to the Poles, he suggested Poland as the best state to which they should be united.

4/ BG-7, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 180.03101/13.

5/ BG-15, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 180.03101/22.

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united. Because of the anarchy prevalent in the eastern districts of old historical Poland, the Poles were "satisfied to renounce these districts for the sake of preserving peace and order within their own borders. 5/

The inter-Allied mission to Poland, whose American members were General F. J. Korman and Dr. R. H. Lord, was able to give little attention to the definition of eastern frontiers during its stay in Poland. After returning to Paris, the mission, at its meeting April 8, 1919, considered four possible lines: 7/

(1) the claim of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs running east of Minsk, Pinsk, and Kamensk-Podolsk;

(2) a proposal by M. Bouleux (France) somewhat west of the preceding line, but also east of Minsk and Pinsk;

(3) a line considered by Sir Esmé Howard (Great Britain) as forming a possible basis of negotiations, running east of Vilna, Baranovitz, Pinsk and Tarnopol;

(4) a minimum line representing the limit of the territory considered by Sir Esmé Howard as incontestably Polish, running just west of Grodno, east of Brest-Litovsk and just east of Przemyśl. This last does not differ much from the later "Curzon Line". Map C herewith 8/

In this discussion the French and Italian members favored giving to Poland territory east of Sir Esmé Howard's "minimum" line. Sir Esmé thought it should not be given to Poland immediately as it was not inhabited by the Poles, a view shared by Dr. Lord who believed the question might wait until Russia had an established government. In the meantime, Poland might administer the

territory

6/ BG-16, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 180.03101/53.

7/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 181.21301/51, page 157.

8/ Minutes and report of the Mission, file nos. 763.72119 & 94/33 and Paris Peace Conf. 181.21301/51, page 426.

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territory under a mandate from the League of Nations so as not to leave it in the hands of the Bolsheviks. Dr. Lord further proposed that a provisional frontier should be drawn, to the east of which would lie the contested area to be temporarily administered as a mandate, pending the determination of the wishes of the population by a commission of inquiry.

The conclusions of the Mission on Poland's eastern frontiers were presented in its report on April 17, 1919:

"The eastern frontiers of Poland should be determined, when circumstances permit, taking account of ethnographic considerations and of the wishes of the populations, without such frontiers in any case being more restricted than those of the old Congress Poland." 2/

Commission on Polish Affairs

The line finally accepted by the Supreme Council as Poland's eastern frontier and subsequently designated the "Curzon Line" was arrived at in discussions of the Commission on Polish Affairs created by the Supreme Council on February 18, 1919. American representatives on this Commission were Dr. Isaiah Bowman and Dr. R. R. Lord. 10/

Until

2/ Translation from Conclusions to the Mission's report, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 181.21301/51, page 478.

10/ Brief descriptions by Professor Lord of the treatment of the eastern frontier of Poland at the Peace Conference may be found in Mackins and Lord, Some Problems of the Peace Conference (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 183-200 and House and Seymour, What Really Happened At Paris (New York, 1921), pp. 83-86. There is also an account by H. J. Paton, British expert on this frontier, in Temperley's History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, pp. 274-283, containing a useful map.

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Until March 19, 1919, the Commission was concerned only with the Polish boundaries bordering Germany and made no investigation of Poland's eastern and southern frontiers, pending decision by the Supreme Council regarding the status of Lithuania, the Ukraine, and other areas. At a meeting of the Council of Ten on March 19, however, Mr. Balfour stated his opinion that the Commission should proceed without delay to fix the proper ethnographical limits of Poland "in order that when the Conference came to deal with the question of Lemberg, and of the oil wells of Eastern Galicia, it should have before it an impartial judgment". Such a judgment would also be useful to the Council if it were called upon to adjudicate the claims of the Ukrainian delegation. 11/ Accordingly, at the Commission's meeting on March 20, 1919, a sub-commission was appointed to study the eastern frontiers of Poland, and principles to be observed in delimiting that frontier were discussed. Dr. Bowman was of the opinion that it would be difficult to apply principles such as those on which the western frontier had been established. 12/ General Le Rond of France felt

that

11/ BG-53, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 100.05101/60.

12/ The principles followed in determining the western frontier of Poland appear in Report No. 1 of the Commission on Polish Affairs (file no. Paris Peace Conf. 101.21302/1) and were as follows:

"(a.) That primary consideration be given to the line of ethnic separation in such a way as to secure the fairest possible settlement between the two peoples concerned.

(b.) That rectifications of the frontier, in some places in favour of the Poles and in others in favour of the Germans, be made where the ethnic facts are outweighed by the other facts and principles involved.

(c.) That due weight be attached to lines of religious cleavage, as, for example, in Mazuria, where a Protestant population exists which is Polish in speech and race.

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that the Commission could not reach very definite conclusions because the policy of the Allies with regard to Russia had not been clearly defined and because the Commission was not in a position to interrogate representatives of the populations concerned. 12/

Principles to Govern Drawing of Boundary

Discussion of the principles to govern the drawing of the boundary was continued on March 29, when the British submitted a draft proposal as follows:

*Proposed principles for the determination of Eastern frontiers of Poland:

(1) The principles ought in general to be the same as those applied in the determination of the Western frontiers of Poland. (see Report No. 1);

(2) The boundary as against Russian territory should be based on the declaration of the provisional government of Russia which recognized Polish independence in all regions where there was an ethnographic Polish majority;

(3) The

(d.) That slight adjustments be made in a line based on the above determining considerations wherever such adjustments would make the proposed line coincide with a well-recognized line of historical division, as, for example, on the borders of the province of Poznania, which coincide with the frontier of the Kingdom of Poland prior to 1772.

(e.) That natural economic relations and existing means of communication be taken into consideration in order that the normal industrial life of each community should be restored as quickly as possible.

(f.) That account be taken of the exposed situation of Poland between Russia on the one hand and Germany on the other, and that after all the above factors have been duly taken into consideration, attention be paid to the strengthening of the defensive frontiers of the new Polish State. While such a strengthening in no case gives Poland any advantage for offensive action, it diminishes to some extent the dangers which threaten her, exposed as she is to attack on the east, the west, and the north over unobstructed plains which offer at best but insignificant natural defences."

12/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 141.213201/13.

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(3) The areas where uncertainty exists as to the character and wishes of the population cannot at present be assigned to the Polish State.

(4) After defining an Eastern frontier according to the above principles, the Commission will meet and compare the data relative to the territories situated East of this line in so far as the union of any part of this territory with Poland appears to be open to subsequent consideration, as soon as there is a Russian Government with whom the Great Powers could treat on this question." 14/

After consideration of several modifications, the following statement was adopted:

"Principles for the Determination of the Eastern Frontiers of Poland against the Territories of the Former Russian Empire.

1. The announcement of the Provisional Government of Russia, which recognized the "formation of an independent Polish State consisting of all the area inhabited by a majority of Poles" is considered as the proper basis for the definition of the Eastern frontier of Poland within the territories of the former Russian Empire.

2. The course of this frontier will be determined according to the principles which were followed in the definition of the Western frontier of Poland.

3. The districts in which doubt arises as to the ethnographical character or wishes of the population cannot at present be assigned to the Polish State.

4. In proposing to the Conference an Eastern frontier determined according to the above principles, the Commission at the same time suggests:--

(a) that in certain areas east of this frontier which are to be determined by the Commission, an enquiry should be made into the ethnological, linguistic and religious character and the wishes of the inhabitants;

(b) that this enquiry should be made, if possible, on the spot;

(c) that a definite settlement of the question of the Eastern frontier of Poland should be made as soon as a Russian Government is established, with which the Great Powers can deal

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14/ File no. Paris Peace Conference 151.213201/15.

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in regard to this question." 15/

Establishment of a Provisional Boundary

The Sub-commission, even before the final adoption of these principles, had at its meeting of March 26, proceeded to the examination of certain portions of the frontier, commencing with the region north of Galicia (Government of Kholm). Religious statistics and census figures were examined and after some discussion an agreement was reached as follows:

"The American, Italian and French Delegations agree on the following line as the Eastern frontier of Poland. Starting from the former frontier between Austria-Hungary and Russia, the Bug to form the frontier from the point where it cuts this former frontier to Oppalin, Northeast of Kholm. The British Delegation makes a reservation as regards the allocation of the districts of Tarnobrzeg and Brzezany until such time as the frontier has been described in Eastern Galicia." 16/

A further provisional agreement was reached concerning the frontier farther north (region of Brest-Litovsk) as follows:

"Between Oppalin and Mielnik the four Delegations agree that the Bug constitutes the Eastern ethnological boundary of Poland, but that the question of the frontier depends on the fate of the town of Brest-Litovsk by reason of its position on the Bug, and its importance as a railway centre." 17/

Concerning the northern portion of the line a provisional agreement was reached in the following terms:

"The American, Italian and French Delegations agree in considering that north of the Bug the general line, passing near Mielnik, Bielak, Bialystok and Grodno, north of Sejny, and following the northern limit of the district of Suwalki, forms the eastern and northern limit of the territory

unquestionably

18/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 161.21501/16.
19/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 161.21501/2.
20/ Ibid

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unquestionably to be assigned to the Polish State.
The British Delegate makes a reservation pending the obtaining of more exact information as to the situation in the district of Sokolka." 18/

Disputed Lankian

Having thus come to an approximation of an agreed boundary the Sub-commission proceeded to a settlement of points along this line still in dispute. In the course of these discussions the American and French delegates generally were more favorable to Poland while the British and Italian delegates contended for more restricted Polish boundaries. The British representatives based their arguments on ethnographical grounds and on the desirability of preserving the continuity of through railway routes for Russia. Dr. Lord used historical arguments, and the evidence of religious statistics, and pointed out the necessity of giving Poland a defensible frontier.

In three sections of the frontier the American and British points of view were directly opposed and in all three cases the British eventually withdrew from their position. The first of these cases involved the southeastern portion of the Government of Suwalki on the northern end of the frontier, where the British delegate cast some doubt on the Polish character of the inhabitants. When the Italian delegate, Marcio Della Torretta, pointed out, however, that a very small number of villages inhabited by non-Poles was involved and urged the advantage of adopting the Nienon as a frontier, the British delegate agreed to such a line, which was originally proposed by Dr. R. M. Lord, the American delegate. 19/

The Second Disputed Area -- Nienon to the Bug

The second portion of the frontier concerning which the American and British Delegates presented opposing views was that between the Nienon and the Bug. Dr. Lord

thought

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19/ File No. 101.0130101/4.

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thought it desirable to consider together the three districts of Szekelka, Byelostok and Byelsk, which formed a single whole. From 1809 until the partition, this district had remained an integral part of Poland. Thereafter the three districts had been part of Prussia until the Peace of Tilsit, and thus by pure accident had been separated from the rest of Poland and incorporated into Russia.

"Ethnographically the Western part of the three districts was specifically Polish. The Eastern Part was mixed, with Polish islands and with a high proportion of White Russians towards Szekelka and of Ukrainians toward Byelostok." EO

Dr. Lord produced a map on which it was shown that the limit of the Polish area left the Bug east of Grodno, and passing to the west of Brest and Byelsk, came close to Byelostok. He indicated that the district of Szekelka, while represented in Russian statistics as inhabited by a majority of White Russian Catholics, was strongly polonized.

The British delegate, Mr. Paton, was disposed to have the frontier pass east of Byelostok and felt that the Polish hold upon Szekelka was strong. He was not convinced that the three districts referred to by Dr. Lord had a Polish majority. Although the educated class spoke Polish and was Polish in sympathy, this did not afford sufficient reason for assigning the area to Poland. He, therefore, preferred to draw the frontier west of the administrative boundaries, nearer to what he considered to be the ethnological boundary. At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Paton pointed out a line that would pass south of Siera, leaving Szekelka outside Poland, and would include Byelostok but not Byelsk. Mielejanyes would be outside, Mielnik inside, the Polish frontier.

Professor de Martonne of France agreed with Dr. Lord's views concerning this area. He observed that the line to be adopted by the Commission would probably pass close to Grodno, Byelostok, Mielnik, and Brest-Litovsk. These points were connected by an important railway which it would

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be clearly to the advantage of Poland to possess. He suggested that the frontier be drawn so as to leave the whole of this railway to Poland. Mr. Paton of Great Britain observed, however, that as the towns of Gredno and Brest-Litovsk would probably be left to Russia it was important that the railway should remain in Russian territory at least as far as Kischelli. II/

In subsequent discussions of this section of the frontier, Mr. Lord advocated, primarily on strategic grounds, a frontier following the course of the Bvialoch. He recalled that the Commission had decided to establish the eastern frontier of Poland according to the same principles as the western frontiers and that strategic necessities had been considered in tracing the western frontier. These considerations were even more pressing on the east. It would be especially unwise to deprive Poland of all protection on the Russian side and make the frontier pass within 70 miles of Warsaw; therefore the frontier should be carried 10 to 15 kilometers east from the line proposed in the last meeting so as to give Poland the defensive area of the Bvialoch and the Bialoveska forest.

Such a line was thought excellent by the Chairman, General le Maréchal of France, since it constituted not only an important barrier but a "true natural line of demarcation from the economic as well as from what was properly called the geographic point of view." Professor de Martonne of the French delegation also favoured the line proposed by Mr. Lord, but the Italian representative, Marquis Della Torretta, objected to the adoption of a strategic frontier exclusively to the advantage of Poland. Mr. Paton of Great Britain agreed with this point of view, and stated that from the military view point, his experts were of the opinion that it would be sufficient for Poland to be secured the town of Byelostok. In any case, he saw serious inconvenience in cutting the Brest-Litovsk-Kischelli railway, which he believed should be left entirely to the Russians. Professor de Martonne demonstrated, however, that shipments between Brest-Litovsk and Warsaw were much greater than those between Brest-Litovsk and Moscow.

In further argument for moving the frontier 10 to 15 kilometers to the east, Dr. Lord stated that this would

not

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not effect any important Russian interest but would present Poland with a defensible frontier as great in importance to her as the Rhine territory was to France. Mr. Paton of Great Britain objected that Russia had an important interest in this region which was necessary to insure "the indispensable communication between the territories north and south of the Pripyet marshes, so much more necessary here because Russia was a country where railroads are rare". On the other hand, Mr. Paton stated that this line of the Svisloch and the forest was not the last defensive line covering Warsaw. "The line of the Bug, which was the former boundary of Congress Poland, formed a much more serious obstacle than the Svisloch." 22/

In the last meeting of the sub-commission the British advanced a compromise line for this area, which they admitted was unsatisfactory and subsequently withdrew, returning to their original stand. At this meeting Dr. Lord again insisted upon the inconvenience of leaving unprotected a frontier so close to the Polish capital, remarking that

"... the line which he proposed would indeed cut the Brest-Litovsk Railway, but that the Railway from Brest-Litovsk through Baranovitchi would be left to the Russians. Ethnographic considerations appeared unimportant in the District of Biala where there was a considerable Orthodox. Further to the North the population was Catholic, and there was no reason for annexing it rather to the Russians than to the Poles."

The Chairman, General Le Bon of France, supported Dr. Lord's solution as providing "a simple, clear, natural frontier, equally satisfactory from a defensive point of view for the two neighboring countries". The Italian delegation announced its readiness to support any formula which could resolve the differences between the British and the American delegation, whereupon Mr. Paton of Great Britain accepted the line agreed to by the other

delegations

22/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 181.2137101/5.

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delegations, subject to the condition that "the town of Grodno would be sufficiently protected toward the west and the South." 22/

Thus the section of the frontier principally in dispute was settled by the British receding from their position in favor of the line advocated by Dr. Lord as being strategically favorable to Poland. The boundary was then fixed as far south as the vicinity of Kholm (beyond which it was not continued because the Galician question was still unsettled), and presented to the full Commission on April 10, 1919, by General Le Rond, who summed up its advantages as follows:

"... The Frontier submitted to the Commission had the advantage of being very clear on the ground; almost everywhere it followed waterways, the lakes in the Suwalki region, and further south, the Niemen, the Wisloka for a great distance, and the Bug. Between the Niemen and the Bug it passed along the edge of the large forest of Bielewiej which constituted a very clear line of demarkation and at the same time a good protection from a military point of view. It would be easy to determine the line on the spot, as almost everywhere the proposed frontier followed natural lines or administrative divisions." 23/

The Commission unanimously adopted the line proposed and embodied it in a report issued April 22, 1919. This report, after stating the principles on which decisions were based 24/, considered their application to special areas, and recapitulated the factors which determined the location of these segments of the frontier:

"Application of Principles to Special Cases.

(a.) Region between Grodno and Brest-Litovsk. In this region the frontier has been laid down a certain distance to the east of the limit within which the Poles are known to have a compact ethnographic majority. This has been done in order to secure adequate connection between Poland and the Polish part of the Government of Suwalki, and to give Poland a satisfactory defensive frontier along the River Wisloka

and

22/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 181.2132101/8.

24/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 181.213201/15.

25/ Report No. 2 of the Commission on Polish Affairs.

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and the edge of the Bialowieza forest. The frontier follows the natural geographic line of division in this area and conforms to the economic interests of the inhabitants.

(b.) The Fortresses of Grodno and Brest-Litovsk. The question of the two fortresses has been considered very carefully by the Commission, and while the proposed frontier excluded both towns from Poland, the two cases are treated somewhat differently. In the case of Brest-Litovsk the frontier follows the line of the river Bug, with the consequence that two outlying forts remain west of the frontier. The integrity of the fortress has thus been sacrificed in view of the importance of interfering as little as possible with the free navigation of the river, which can be taken as the frontier in this region without affecting the economic life of the townspeople of Brest-Litovsk, which lies wholly to the east of the river. In the case of Grodno, on the other hand, the frontier leaves the River Niemen and keeps to the west of all the forts. This solution has been adopted mainly because a suburb of the town of Grodno lies to the west of the river; further, the navigation of the Niemen is far from having the same importance to Poland as that of the Bug, in view of the fact that only a short length of the Niemen will lie in Polish territory. In each case, the main consideration which has influenced the Commission has been that of providing for the free and unrestricted development of the economic life of the town in question.

(c.) The Northern Part of the Government of Kholm. The proposed frontier follows the Taking of the River Bug, which is the geographical and historical line of division in this region. In this area the population is very mixed, and the Ruthenian element, besides being comparatively small, has little national consciousness. The system of Law (the code Napoleon) was until 1918 the same as that for the rest of Congress Poland, and the economic life and civilization of this area is connected with Poland rather than with Russia. In any such circumstances the historic frontier appears not only to secure for Poland the only natural line of defence possible in this area, but also to be in accordance with the interests of the local population." RM

Continuation

RM File no. Paris Peace Conf. 161.21202/3.

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Continuation of the Frontier.

No eastern frontier of Poland had been decided upon by the Supreme Council when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919. In signing the Treaty, however, Poland agreed that

"The boundaries of Poland not laid down in the present Treaty will be subsequently determined by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers."

There the matter rested for some time. On July 19 Professor Lord wrote Mr. Crow, Secretary General of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, that the provisional frontier recommended by the Commission, which would assign to Poland immediately the territories which are clearly and unmistakably Polish, had not yet been considered by the Supreme Council. He reported that

"...Beyond this minimum frontier there is a broad region, at present under the occupation of Polish armies, in which the ethnographic situation and the desires of the populations are very far from clear (mainly the Governments of Grodno and Wilno). Here the Commission has agreed to present a new report defining the doubtful areas and making some suggestions as to an ultimate consultation of the population, but this report has not yet been drawn up." 22/

Dr. Lord again raised the question of Poland's Eastern frontier at a meeting of the American Commissioners and Technical Advisors on August 13, 1919. He queried whether

"...pending the restoration of Russia, Poland should be left without any kind of frontier on the East, or whether she should receive some kind of provisional frontiers until there is a recognized government in Russia again, after which there will have to be an agreement between Poland and Russia, and very probably there will have to be a mediation by the League of Nations." 22/

He

22/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 181.2132/18.

22/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 184.00101/137.

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He also warned that unless steps were taken to fix at least provisional frontiers serious fighting might soon take place between the Poles and the Lithuanians.

The line south of the parallel of Shelm was taken up by the Sub-commission on the Eastern frontiers of Poland at its meeting of August 27, 1919 and the American and British delegates again presented different points of view, the British putting forward a line based on ethnographic considerations and Dr. Lord favoring the line of the Bug because of its geographical advantages, its simplicity and the religious preference of the population. The line proposed by the British followed in large part the administrative boundary and was then drawn appreciably to the west of the Bug line. Dr. Lord protested that it would be impossible to trace an ethnic boundary in this confused region where, in fact, the Austrian occupation had reduced a great proportion of the orthodox element, and where there had never been a national Ruthenian movement. He could see no apparent reason for "separating from Poland the territory situated between the Bug and the frontier envisaged by the British delegation, when this territory has been intimately bound to Poland for six hundred years." Although Lieutenant Colonel Kisch of the British delegation contended that the line proposed by his delegation would be defended on geographical as well as ethnical grounds, the French and Italian representatives announced themselves as favorable to the Bug line. The British delegation thereupon withdrew its proposal and accepted the line of the Bug. 22/

Reasons for the selection of the line of the Bug, as stated in Report No. 6 of the Commission on Polish Affairs were:

"The frontier line of the Bug proposed by Report No. 2 and the present Report formed the frontier between the Kingdom of Poland and Russia from 1815 to 1912.

From the geographical point of view the line of Bug constitutes a satisfactory frontier, indisputably superior to any other to be found in this flat region, which is destitute of natural features. It assigns

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22/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 101.21301/48.

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to Poland a territory occupied by a mixed population, with a considerable percentage of Little Russians in the neighborhood of the Bug, who have, however, always lived and still live in complete harmony with the Poles without showing any separatist tendencies. It is also necessary to point out that since the commencement of the war, part of the Little Russian population has quitted the country, the emigrants having been replaced by Poles. It is probable that, at the present date the area in question contains a Polish majority.

Moreover, this region has formed part of Poland for close upon six hundred years; it has only been separated from her on two occasions: in 1918, by the former Russian Government, which was pursuing in the Province of Kholm a Russicising policy condemned even in Russia by liberal opinion; and in 1918, by the intervention of the German and Austrian Governments, at the time of the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.

Finally, from the economic point of view, the territory is closely connected with Poland, and the trend of all its intercourse is far more towards the West than towards the East.

For these reasons the Commission is unanimous in proposing to the Supreme Council the line described above." 30/

Meaning of the Eastern Frontier

On several occasions Dr. Lord had raised the question as to whether the frontier approved by the Commission was to be regarded as "provisional" or "definitive". At the meeting of the Sub-commission on August 29, 1919, the Chairman answered this query by stating that this line would constitute a minimum frontier for Poland, the maximum frontier to be discussed later with Russia. At his suggestion the Commission approved the following policy.

"To the west of the line traced by the Commission, the sovereignty of Poland is definitive; to the East, Poland now has rights acquired through

30/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 191.213202/10.

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a ~~de facto~~ occupation, and only these rights; these rights are subject to a subsequent revision after negotiations with Russia, the League of Nations being arbiter between Russia and Poland." 21/

The boundary recommended by the Commission was accepted by the Supreme Council on September 25, 1919, without consideration of its details. In the course of the discussion, Sir Eyre Crowe of Great Britain stated that he approved the proposals of the Commission as did Mr. Folk, the American delegate, who regarded them as leaving Poland a choice between two solutions.

"(a) The acceptance of the minimum line proposed in the Committee's reports, with the assurance that this line would not prejudice any future negotiations regarding this frontier after the re-establishment of Russia or the obtaining of satisfactory information regarding the desires of the people to the east of this frontier; or

"(b) leaving the determination of this eastern frontier entirely open until such time as Russia and Poland considered it possible to make a definite settlement." 22/

In reporting these matters to the Secretary of State, Mr. Crowe on September 20, 1919, wrote that the reports of the Polish Commission could be regarded as fixing a temporary and minimum frontier for Poland, and added:

"It is understood that Poland will thereby be enabled to exercise full authority and sovereignty within the limits indicated but without prejudicing Polish claims to territory which may lie to the East of this frontier, where a final settlement can only be reached after the re-establishment of Russia. The line indicated in these Reports is drawn in such

a

21/ File no. Paris Peace Conf. 101.2132101/49.

22/ HD-60, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 100.03801/60.

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a way as to include only districts of which the Polish character could hardly be called in question by any future government in Russia." ^{23/}

After some consideration as to the means by which the boundary decided upon should be communicated to the Polish Government, the Supreme Council incorporated it into a declaration approved December 2, 1918, and signed by the President of the Council December 8, 1918. ^{24/} The text was accompanied by a map showing the course of the line. (See map E herewith.)

It was this line which through its advocacy by Lord Curzon in the Spa proposals in July, 1920, in an attempt to halt the Polish-Russian war, became known as the "Curzon Line". ^{25/}

^{23/} File no. Paris Peace Conf. 181.218202/10.

^{24/} HD-104, file no. Paris Peace Conf. 188.03801/104 and 188.311/809.

^{25/} For brief accounts of these negotiations see Harold Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase 1918-1928 (Boston and New York, 1934), pp. 202-208, where also will be found an outline map showing the relation of the Curzon Line to other frontiers of Poland, and Tenperley, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 319-322, with map, p. 322.